

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A stable, self-standing, taco shell, comprising:
a first sidewall and a second sidewall interconnected by a substantially flat base, the taco shell configured so the height of the taco shell is approximately 1.50 to 4.0 times the width of the base.
2. The taco shell of claim 1 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 1.75 to 3.35 times the width of the base.
3. The taco shell of claim 1 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 2.0 to 3.0 times the width of the base.
4. The taco shell of claim 1 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 2.0 to 2.5 times the width of the base.
5. A stable, self-standing, taco shell, comprising:
a first sidewall and a second sidewall interconnected by a substantially flat base, the taco shell configured so the height of the taco shell is about 50 to 110 millimeters and the width of the base is at least about 10 millimeters.
6. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the base width of the taco shell is about 16 millimeters or greater.
7. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the base width of the taco shell is about 19 millimeters or greater.
8. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the base width of the taco shell is about 21 millimeters or greater.
9. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the base width of the taco shell is about 25 to 26 millimeters.

- 17 -

10. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 57 to 77 millimeters and the base width of the taco shell is at least about 16 millimeters or greater.

11. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 57 to 70 millimeters and the base width of the taco shell is about 19 millimeters or greater.

12. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 57 to 70 millimeters and the base width of the taco shell is about 25 to 26 millimeters.

13. The taco shell of claim 5 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 57 to 70 millimeters and the base width of the taco shell is about 21 millimeters or greater.

14. A method of making a stable, self-standing, taco shell, comprising:

providing a tortilla; and

placing the tortilla on a mold configured so the resulting taco shell has a first sidewall and a second sidewall interconnected by a substantially flat base, and the height of the resulting taco shell is about 1.50 to 4.0 times the base width of the taco shell.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the height of the resulting taco shell is about 1.75 to 3.35 times the width of the base.

16. The method of claim 14 wherein the height of the resulting taco shell is about 2.0 to 3.0 times the width of the base.

17. The method of claim 14 wherein the height of the resulting taco shell is about 2.0 to 2.5 times the width of the base.

- 18 -

18. A method of using a stable, self-standing, taco shell, comprising:

locating a flat surface;

selecting at least one stable, self-standing, taco shell having a first sidewall and a second sidewall interconnected by a substantially flat base, the taco shell configured so the height of the taco shell is about 1.50 to 4.0 times the width of the base;

placing the at least one taco shell upright on the flat surface;
and

filling the at least one taco shell with taco filling.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 1.75 to 3.35 times the width of the base.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 2.0 to 3.0 times the width of the base.

21. The method of claim 18 wherein the height of the taco shell is about 2.0 to 2.5 times the width of the base.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the act of filling the at least one taco shell with taco filling is practiced prior to placing the at least one taco shell upright on the flat surface.

23. A stable, self-standing, taco shell, comprising:

a first sidewall element;

a second sidewall element;

a substantially flat base element;

- 19 -

a first curved element interconnecting the first sidewall element to the flat base element; and

a second curved element interconnecting the second sidewall element to the flat base element.

24. The taco shell of claim 23 wherein at least one the elements has a thickness of less than 1.5 millimeters.

25. The taco shell of claim 23 wherein at least one the elements has a thickness of at least 1.5 millimeters.

26. The taco shell of claim 23 wherein at least one of the curved elements has a radius of about 6 millimeters or greater.

27. The taco shell of claim 23 wherein at least one of the curved elements has a radius of about 3 to 6 millimeters.

28. The taco shell of claim 23 wherein at least one of the curved elements has a radius of about 3 millimeters or less.

29. A method of making a stable, self-standing, taco shell, comprising:

providing a tortilla; and

placing the tortilla on a mold configured so the resulting taco shell has a first sidewall element, a second sidewall element, a substantially flat base element, a first curved element interconnecting the first sidewall element to the flat base element, and a second curved element interconnecting the second sidewall element to the flat base element.

30. The taco shell of claim 29 wherein at least one the elements has a thickness of less than 1.5 millimeters.

31. The taco shell of claim 29 wherein at least one the elements has a thickness of at least 1.5 millimeters.

32. The method of claim 29 wherein at least one of the curved elements has a radius of about 6 millimeters or greater.

33. The method of claim 29 wherein at least one of the curved elements has a radius of about 3 to 6 millimeters.

34. The method of claim 29 wherein at least one of the curved elements has a radius of about 3 millimeters or less.

35. A method of using a stable, self-standing, taco shell, comprising:

locating a flat preparation or use surface;

selecting at least one self-standing, taco shell having a first sidewall element, a second sidewall element, a substantially flat base element, a first curved element interconnecting the first sidewall element to the flat base element, and a second curved element interconnecting the second sidewall element to the flat base element;

placing the at least one taco shell upright on the preparation or use surface; and

filling the at least one taco shell with taco filling.

36. The taco shell of claim 35 wherein the act of selecting includes selecting a self-standing taco shell with at least one of the elements having a thickness of less than 1.5 millimeters.

37. The taco shell of claim 35 wherein the act of selecting includes selecting a self-standing taco shell with at least one of the elements having a thickness of at least 1.5 millimeters.

38. The method of claim 35 wherein the act of selecting includes selecting a self-standing taco shell with at least one of the curved elements having a radius of about 6 millimeters or greater.

39. The method of claim 35 wherein the act of selecting includes selecting a self-standing taco shell with at least one of the curved elements having a radius of about 3 to 6 millimeters.

40. The method of claim 35 wherein the act of selecting includes selecting a self-standing taco shell with at least one of the curved elements having a radius of about 3 millimeters or less.

41. The method of claim 35, wherein the act of filling the at least one taco shell with taco filling is practiced prior to placing the at least one taco shell upright on the preparation or use surface.

42. A method of preparing a taco, comprising:
placing on a generally flat surface a self-standing taco shell
having a volume; and
filling at least a portion the volume of the self-standing taco shell
with an edible foodstuff.

43. The method of 42 then further comprising filling at least a portion of the volume with at least another edible foodstuff.

44. The method of claim 42, wherein the act of placing comprises placing at least two self-standing taco shells each having a volume on a surface.

45. The method of claim 44 further comprising filling a portion of the volume of each of the self-standing taco shells with an edible foodstuff.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the act of filling comprises filling a portion of the volume of each of the self-standing taco shells with an edible foodstuff that includes meat.

47. The method of claim 45, wherein the act of filling comprises filling a portion of the volume of each of the self-standing taco shells with an edible foodstuff that includes beans.

48. The method of claim 46 further comprising filling at least a portion of the volume of each self-standing taco shell with at least one of meat, vegetables, cheese and taco sauce.

49. The method of claim 47 further comprising filling at least a portion of the volume of each self-standing taco shell with at least one of meat, vegetables, cheese and taco sauce.

50. The method of claim 42, wherein the act of placing on a surface a self-standing taco shell includes placing the taco shell on a surface with at least one support surface to further stabilize the taco shell in a standing position.

51. The method of claim 42, wherein the act of placing on a surface a self-standing taco shell includes placing the taco shell on a surface with more than one support surface to further stabilize the taco shell in a standing position.

52. The method of claim 44, wherein the act of placing on a surface at least two self-standing taco shells includes placing each taco shell on a surface with at least one support surface to further stabilize the taco shell in a standing position.

53. The method of claim 44, wherein the act of placing on a surface at least two self-standing taco shells includes placing each taco shell on a surface with more than one support surface to further stabilize the taco shell in a standing position.